

Claims

What is claimed is:

1. A method for selecting a contact path between a member of an organization and a target individual, the
5 method comprising:
tracking network communications of the members of the organization;
analyzing the level of interaction between the members of the organization based on the network
10 communications;
selecting a contact path between a selected member of the organization and the target individual, the contact path including one or more members of the organization having at least a predetermined level of
15 interaction with the selected member and the target individual.
2. The method of Claim 1 further comprising:
modeling the people network of the organization as a
20 directed graph having plural nodes representing members of the organization and plural edges representing levels of interaction between members of the organization;
wherein analyzing the level of interaction comprises analyzing the edges associated with the selected member
25 and the target individual.
3. The method of Claim 2 wherein each edge comprises one or more weights, each weight representing a level of interaction for one type of network
30 communication.

4. The method of Claim 3 wherein one weight represents the level of interaction for e-mail communication.

5 5. The method of Claim 3 wherein one weight represents the level of interaction for instant messenger communication.

10 6. The method of Claim 3 wherein one weight represents the level of interaction for telephone communication.

15 7. The method of Claim 2 further comprising:
storing one or more areas of expertise for plural
members of the organization; and
identifying an area of expertise desired by the
selected member of the organization;
wherein the contact path comprises one or more
members of the organization that represent a proposed
20 path through the people network for the selected member
to contact a member of the organization having the
desired expertise.

25 8. The method of Claim 7 wherein:
selecting a contact path further comprises selecting
plural contact paths, each contact path representing a
proposed path through the people network for the selected
member to contact a member of the organization having the
desired expertise.

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9. The method of Claim 8 further comprising
graphically depicting the plural contact paths as nodes
representing members of the organization and edges
representing the level of interaction between the
5 members, each node and edge having an appearance that
corresponds to the strength of the contact path.

10. A system for determining a people network representation of an organization, the system comprising:

a communications network operable to exchange communications between plural members of the

5 organization;

a people network model module interfaced with the communications network and operable to model communications of the communications network; and

10 an interaction level analyzer module interfaced with the people network model module and operable to apply a model of the communications to the level of interaction of the plural members to determine a people network representation.

15 11. The system of Claim 10 further comprising a graphical user interface operable to depict a visualization of the people network of a selected member of the organization.

20 12. The system of Claim 11 wherein the graphical user interface depicts the selected member's people network representation as plural nodes interfaced with edges, the nodes representing members of the network and the lines representing the level of interaction between
25 the members.

13. The system of Claim 11 wherein the graphical user interface depicts the selected member's people network representation as a bullseye having the selected
30 member at the center and members of the organization distributed in successive rings representing the level of interaction with the selected member.

14. The system of Claim 10 wherein the people
network model module is further operable to model the
people network of the organization as a directed graph
5 having plural nodes and edges, the nodes representing
members of the organization and the edges representing
the level of interaction between nodes.

15. The system of Claim 10 further comprising a
10 target locator module interfaced with the people network
model and the interaction level analyzer module, the
target locator module operable to accept a query from a
selected member for members of the organization having a
desired expertise and to provide the selected member with
15 one or more target individuals based on the desired
expertise and the level of interaction of the selected
member with members of the organization.

16. The system of Claim 15 wherein the target
20 locator module is further operable to provide target
individuals using a shortest path determination to
prioritize target individuals in order of strongest
contact path with the selected member.

17. A method for determining a target individual having expertise in a subject matter of interest to a selected member of an organization, the method comprising:

- 5 identifying members of the organization having expertise in the subject matter;
selecting as target individuals only the identified members having at least a predetermined level of interaction with the selected member; and
10 providing the selected member with contact paths to the target individuals.

18. The method of Claim 17 wherein selecting as target individuals further comprises identifying members
15 having contact paths of less than a predetermined number of intervening members between the target individual and the selected member.

19. The method of Claim 17 wherein providing the
20 selected member with contact paths comprises:
modeling a people network of the organization based on communications of members of the organization across a network; and
determining the contact paths by analyzing the level
25 of interaction between members of the organization.

20. The method of Claim 19 wherein modeling a people network comprises representing the people network as a directed graph having a node for each member of the
30 organization, the nodes interfaced by edges representing levels of interaction.

21. The method of Claim 20 wherein the communications network supports plural type of communication and wherein each edge has a set of weights, each type of communication having an associated weight.

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22. The method of Claim 19 wherein the communications comprise e-mail communications.

23. The method of Claim 19 wherein the
10 communications comprise instant message communications.

24. The method of Claim 19 wherein the communications comprise phone communications.

15 25. The method of Claim 19 wherein determining the contact paths comprises performing a strongest path analysis using the people network model to prioritize target individuals.